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ABSTRACT

This guide, which was developed from a list of labor-management best practice guidelines that was constructed by nationally recognized work labor-management relations professionals, businesspersons, and union representatives, is designed to help employers determine whether a consultant has the substantive, process, and interpersonal skills required to facilitate improved labor-management relations. Presented first are a statement of the guide's purpose, overview of its structure, and instructions for using the interview guide. Listed next are the four broad topics that should be covered when consultants are interviewed: how the consultant's services will help in establishing/modifying policies and practices; how the consultant will ensure fairness and justice for all employees; how the consultant will encourage employees to take pride in their work; and how the consultant will create/promote an atmosphere of respect, value, and mutual trust. Most of the guide is devoted to discussions of the key points that interviewers should expect to hear in a prospective consultant's comments regarding each topic. Also included are the following: interview worksheet; chart for comparing different consultants; discussion of the guide in the context of other available print and Internet resources designed to facilitate work restructuring efforts; and lists of National Workforce Assistance Collaborative advisory groups. (MN)

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WORKFORCE TOOLS

Prepared by the National Alliance of Business

LABOR-MANAGEMENT RELATIONS INTERVIEW GUIDE

Judging the Quality and Effectiveness of Labor-Management Relations Consultants

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WORKFORCE



Prepared by the National Alliance of Business

LABOR-MANAGEMENT RELATIONS INTERVIEW GUIDE

by Stephen Mitchell

**April 1996
National Alliance of Business**

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CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	1
HOW TO USE THE INTERVIEW GUIDE	3
QUESTIONS	5
ANSWERS	7
1. A Process for Establishing and Modifying Policies and Practices	7
2. Fairness and Justice	10
3. Pride in Work	11
4. Respect, Value, and Mutual Trust	13
INTERVIEW WORKSHEET	15
COMPARISON CHART	19
THIS GUIDE IN CONTEXT	21
ADVISORY GROUPS	23



INTRODUCTION

PURPOSE OF THE LABOR-MANAGEMENT RELATIONS INTERVIEW GUIDE

This Labor-Management Relations Interview Guide can be used to determine whether a labor-management relations consultant has the substantive, process, and people skills to help create and foster a positive and constructive labor-management relationship. A successful consultant will have technical expertise in human resources or collective bargaining, and the communication and facilitation skills to bring labor and management together. The consultant's effectiveness lies as much in an ability to observe, analyze, synthesize, and quickly evaluate your situation in order to apply his or her technical expertise as it does in the level of expertise itself. Therefore, this Guide is designed to help you determine how the consultant would assess and address your problem.

The consultant's role should be to facilitate, but not dictate, the content of the labor-management relations improvement effort; the content should be company-directed and not consultant-directed. The consultant should provide alternative conceptual frameworks to guide the improvement effort, and help evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of each approach.

Before talking to potential consultants, you should take the time to think about what you want, what your concerns are, and what conditions and terms are best for your relationship with a consultant. You should clarify why you feel your company needs a consultant. Identify and carefully analyze the issues you are hoping the consultant will address. Most likely, you will need to hire a consultant if (1) your company lacks the staff expertise or time to deal with the issues confronting the company and (2) you perceive a need for an outsider's viewpoint and intervention.

You should also assess your readiness to work with a consultant to facilitate change. Are you ready and willing to bear the hidden emotional costs (e.g., perceived loss of control, perceived loss of confidentiality) that often accompany working with a consultant on labor-management relations issues? While it may be possible to implement individual labor-management practices in a short amount of time, changing a company's labor-management relations *system* requires a long-term change effort. Are you committed for the long haul?

The more time you take to analyze your need for and readiness to work with a consultant before hiring the consultant, the more likely you are to have a successful experience. If your goal is to enhance the quality of labor-management relations in your firm, we strongly encourage forming a labor-management team to think through these issues. The ability of the team to agree to these issues should give you a good indication of the current status of labor-management relations in your company. If labor and management are not both committed to working with a consultant and willing to make changes in their existing relationship, the consultant cannot help your company, no matter how much you may think your firm needs assistance.

Before hiring a consultant, you should rigorously interview and screen several candidates for the job. This Guide is provided as a tool to assist you in that screening process. The Guide can be used with a

wide variety of labor-management relations consultants, including those from community colleges or universities, nonprofit organizations, private consulting firms, and federal or state mediation programs.

LABOR-MANAGEMENT RELATIONS

The Guide is based on a list of Labor-Management Relations Best Practice Guidelines, constructed by nationally recognized labor-management relations professionals, business people, and union representatives. These individuals characterized labor-management relations in the following way:

Labor-management relations encompasses the mutual *relationship* between an organization's employer and employees, and in unionized workplaces, their union representatives. Labor-management relations deals with:

- The *policies and practices* governing the employees' *relationship* to the company, to the job, and to his or her colleagues; and
- The *process* for establishing and modifying these policies and practices.

Positive labor-management relations establishes a foundation of open communication and trust in the workplace. This foundation enables employees and managers to work together more effectively to share information and expertise to increase productivity, enhance innovation, and improve the workplace environment.

INTERVIEW GUIDE STRUCTURE

The Interview Guide is divided into eight sections:

- 1) *Introduction* — Explains the purpose of the Guide, defines labor-management relations, and lays out the structure of the Guide.
- 2) *How to Use the Interview Guide* — Provides instructions on using the Guide.
- 3) *Questions* — Introduces the Guide's four questions.
- 4) *Answers* — Discusses the types of answers to look for from the consultants you interview.
- 5) *Interview Worksheet* — Provides probes to questions and spaces to write responses to each of the four questions.
- 6) *Comparison Chart* — Provides space to compare the merits of up to four different consultants.
- 7) *This Guide in Context* — Explains how labor-management relations fit within the larger context of workforce and workplace change, and lists other Collaborative products designed to help small and mid-sized companies in their change efforts.
- 8) *Advisory Groups* — Lists the individuals serving on the Collaborative's Advisory Board and Councils.

How To Use The INTERVIEW GUIDE

Before conducting an interview, you should read the Questions and Answers sections of the Guide. These sections will provide you with an enhanced understanding of the questions you might ask and the points that a high-quality consultant would make in responding to these questions. The changes in labor-management relations associated with high-performance work practices strike at the heart of traditional management practices. Successful change requires visionary leadership in both management and labor. As you read through the answers, try to capture your own beliefs in these areas. Both management and labor need to recognize their beliefs, and be willing to question and challenge these beliefs. Once you have familiarized yourself with the questions and answers, you can use the Interview Worksheet to conduct an actual interview.

The ideal labor-management relations consultant would cover each of the points contained in the answers to the four questions in this Guide. However, you will probably find that the different consultants you interview will vary in the number of points they cover, have differing strengths and weaknesses, and charge relatively divergent fees. In the end you will need to use your own set of criteria to select one from among the consultants you interview. Factors to consider include the following:

- The number of points they cover.
- The relative value you place on the points the consultants either do or do not cover.
- Your ability to use other methods to address any of the points not covered by a consultant.
- The fees charged by the consultants — compared with each other and with your budget for working with consultants, and
- Your comfort level with the consultants' approaches and their ability to establish rapport with both labor and management.

In addition, you should look for assistance beyond this Guide to select your consultant. Ask each consultant you interview to provide the following:

- A company resume,
- Resumes of any staff members they intend to use for your project, and
- A list of references.

Check to see what experience consultants and their staffs have in your industry, with companies of comparable size, and in dealing with labor-management relations needs similar to yours. If you are in a unionized site, it is important to check the consultant's experience in working in a unionized setting. Call references and determine how satisfied previous clients were with the services they received. If possible, visit client sites and ask executives for evidence of tangible benefits delivered by the consultant — and whether the companies could have done as well on their own.

It is a worthwhile investment of time up front to ensure that your investment in labor-management relations provides the dividends you are seeking.

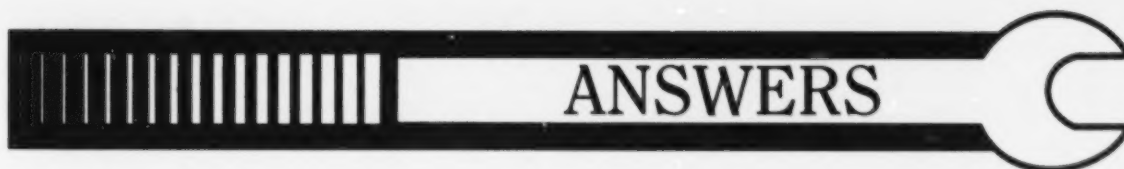
Finally, you can use the Comparison Chart at the back of the Guide to summarize the results of the interviews you conduct and the other information you collect. This will make it easier for you to compare the relative merits of up to four labor-management relations consultants.



QUESTIONS

When you first sit down with a consultant, you will probably start the interview by stating your needs, or the problems you want addressed, and asking the consultant to recommend solutions. During the discussion that follows, you will want to determine the consultant's ability to develop, facilitate, and deliver services targeted at your company's specific needs — services that will enhance the state of labor-management relations in your firm. To do this, you should ensure that the consultant addresses the following four broad areas.

1. **A Process for Establishing and Modifying Policies and Practices:** How will the services you provide help develop a process for establishing and modifying the policies and practices that build commitment by both labor and management to improve individual, group, and organizational performance?
2. **Fairness and Justice:** How will the services you provide help develop policies and practices that do not disadvantage any individual or group of employees?
3. **Pride in Work:** How will the services you provide help develop policies and practices that stimulate pride in work?
4. **Respect, Value, and Mutual Trust:** How will the services you provide help develop policies and practices that demonstrate respect and value for employees and their representative organizations, as well as promote an atmosphere of mutual trust?



ANSWERS

While every consultant's answers to these questions will vary, there are a number of key points that you should expect to hear in a high quality consultant's answers.

1. **A Process for Establishing and Modifying Policies and Practices:** How will the services you provide help develop a process for establishing and modifying policies and practices that build commitment by both labor and management to improve individual, group, and organizational performance?

ES **We ensure policies and practices are developed and modified in an atmosphere of mutual respect, trust, and goodwill.** Employees who provide a competitive advantage are a valuable asset, and company policies and practices should reflect that value. Similarly, employees' livelihoods are directly linked to the success of the company. A quality consultant should plan to assess the current labor-management relations climate in your firm and, where necessary, recommend ways to use this interdependence as a foundation for developing mutual respect, trust, and goodwill. A quality consultant can facilitate open and honest communications between labor and management — communications that are respectful of the differing and common interests of the parties.

In unionized firms, a consultant should recommend specific structures to move a company in the right direction. These structures include joint labor-management committees, employee involvement teams, and/or cooperative agreements. The consultant should draw on this foundation to implement more innovative collective bargaining arrangements, such as collective bargaining based on interest-based techniques ("win-win" bargaining) and cooperative problem solving.

ES **We ensure the viability and credibility of the process for developing and modifying policies and practices.** An effort to change will not be successful if it is not supported widely throughout the company. A quality consultant should help you design and implement structures and processes that involve and commit management and workers (and in unionized firms, their unions) to

- Identify the issues that need to be addressed,
- Help set the objectives that the company wishes to achieve,
- Develop the options available to address the issues identified,
- Identify the changes required,
- Plan the means and time for implementing the options, and

- Design a communications system to distribute relevant information throughout the organization and to collect feedback from the entire workforce.

■ **We help you to establish relevant criteria for developing and modifying policies and practices.** A quality consultant should help you

- Establish criteria to assess labor-management relations policies and practices that take into account human value, the need to increase productivity, and customer requirements.
- Design a process that is future-directed and value-driven, not rule- or position-driven, and
- Integrate best practice labor-management relations into the way your firm does business.

■ **We help you to ensure ongoing monitoring and review of workplace performance.** A quality consultant should help you to design and implement a performance management system that

- Routinely collects, analyzes, and uses customer and performance data to determine progress and success.
- Benchmarks key work processes against industry leaders, as well as high-performing organizations from other industries and sectors, to identify improvement opportunities, and
- Uses an organizational assessment to align labor-management relations policies and practices with other change efforts and to make improvements in an ongoing, systemic fashion.

■ **We help you provide a comprehensive training and development program to assist both workers and managers to acquire the communication, interpersonal, group, and industrial relations skills needed to develop and implement best practice policies and practices.** The goal of a quality consultant is to build the client's capacity. The changes in labor-management relations characteristic of high-performing organizations represent a fundamental reworking of traditional, hierarchical approaches to management and the adversarial approaches to labor relations. A competent consultant should help you design and implement a comprehensive training and development program to support labor and management in their new roles and relationships. The goal should be to help the organization become self sustaining and consultant independent.

■ **In unionized firms, we recognize and accept the union as an independent source of representation for workers.** A quality consultant should recognize that the right of employees at both unionized and unrepresented workplaces to select representatives of their own choosing is integral to all aspects of a democratic, high-performance workplace. A quality consultant who will be operating in a unionized work setting should

- Engage the labor organization as a partner, recognizing the legitimate role of the union leadership as a change agent,

- Meet independently and jointly with labor and management to gain a better understanding of each party's views and objectives and to facilitate an effective labor-management partnership.
- Recognize the legitimate role of the existing collective bargaining agreement, know its contents, and understand its bearing on the issues to be addressed in this consulting relationship.
- Ensure that employee involvement enhances, rather than subverts, any existing labor-management processes, and
- Acknowledge the value of equal representation of workers and management on any employee involvement team, whenever possible using the union to select the employee members.

2. **Fairness and Justice:** How will the services you provide help develop policies and practices that do not disadvantage any individual or group of employees?

ES **We work to ensure that policies and practices minimize social and economic distinctions between management and other employees.** A good workplace is based on a sense of community. It helps people find the most effective, most productive, and most rewarding ways of working together. A quality consultant should be prepared to identify the structures, processes, and norms in your company that reinforce social and economic distinctions between staff members, isolate people, and discourage open discussion. The consultant should be prepared to help develop new rules, policies, and procedures to provide some standards of treatment that

- Ensure there is no disadvantage to any individuals or groups of employees.
- Reduce benefit and status differentials between workers and managers, and
- Provide consistency of treatment across all employees.

ES **We help ensure that issue resolution systems provide due process and allow free speech.** A quality consultant should be prepared to help you design and implement systems for issue resolution that

- Provide a clear process with specific forums to inquire about policies, procedures, or key decisions that an individual or group finds unjust, and to advocate for a different outcome, and
- Include preventative mechanisms (i.e., ways to solicit opinions and suggestions about organizational policies and practices before an injustice occurs) and remedial mechanisms (i.e., appeals to organizational policies and practices after injustice has occurred).

A quality consultant should be prepared to help you create an issue resolution system that is

- Efficient (e.g., has simple procedures, broad application, and a good diagnostic system),
- Accessible (e.g., is conducted through an open process and is easy to use, well advertised, and comprehensible),
- Correct (e.g., is well administered, includes follow-up, is self-redesigning, and has correctable outcomes),
- Responsive (e.g., is timely and culturally viable, and has tangible results and management commitment to the process), and
- Nonpunitive (e.g., has an appeal system, protects anonymity, and is nonretributive).

3. **Pride in Work:** How will the services you provide help develop policies and practices that stimulate pride in work?

■ **We help you train all workers to know what the business is about, the challenges the company faces, and the contributions they make to the company's productivity and success.** High-performance companies find that sharing information with all employees is critical to their success. A quality consultant should be prepared to assess your current communications system and be ready to help you design and implement a more effective system by

- Determining the types of information that should be shared, such as strategic plans, organizational priorities, budget constraints, operating results by business unit, competitors' relative performance, and plans for new technology.
- Employing new techniques (e.g., e-mail, groupware, networks) to move information across the organization in ways that encourage, promote, and facilitate employee access, and
- Providing workers the necessary training in how to interpret and apply pertinent data, while respecting the confidentiality of such data.

■ **We help you to provide opportunities for individual and collective involvement in problem solving at all levels of the company.** Continuous learning requires an action orientation. That is, the company must provide opportunities for employees to use their skills and demonstrate their commitment. These opportunities for involvement allow learning to occur. A quality consultant should be prepared to design and implement a number of innovative structures and programs to tap into employees' knowledge and to determine which structures and programs would be most appropriate to your firm. These programs may range from consultative committees (quality circles) to self-directed work teams.

■ **We help you to provide opportunities for individual and collective involvement in decision making related to management systems.** To be truly effective, high-performance companies are working to end confrontational relationships between workers and managers. A quality consultant should be prepared to help you design and implement programs to develop partnerships among management, workers, and unions. The partnerships should focus on joint accountability, responsibility, and decision making on such issues as the company's mission and goals.

■ **We ensure that ongoing professional development and technical training strategies equip workers with a broad range of skills to increase labor flexibility, develop employees' capacity, and maximize employees' contributions.** High-performance companies view their workers as valuable assets and make investments accordingly. They change their approach to worker learning in fundamental ways. A quality consultant should be prepared to design and implement a workforce development program that

- Integrates training, work design, and employee communication.

- Facilitates the deployment and takes full advantage of performance support systems,
- Provides learning experiences that enhance long-term skills while enabling employees to address short-term problems on the job (through programs such as job rotation, cross-functional teams, and benchmarking), and
- Balances training investments among all workers, providing workers with new skills in problem solving, team building, and the basics of business operations and providing managers with training for their new roles as strategic planners, coaches, teachers, and facilitators.

■ **We show you how to organize work to promote employee skill development, commitment, responsibility, flexibility, and organizational productivity.** Commitment has less to do with the personal qualities people bring with them to the workplace than with how jobs are designed and managed within it. High-performance firms build participation and empowerment into their organizational structure. A quality consultant should be prepared to help flatten organizational structures, push decision making to the lowest levels of the firm, assemble employees into teams that perform entire processes, and break down barriers across departments. The consultant should be experienced in the use of broad job classifications, special assignments, job rotation, multiskilling, and cross-functional positions and teams.

4. Respect, Value, and Mutual Trust: How will the services you provide help develop policies and practices that demonstrate respect and value for employees and their representative organizations, as well as promote an atmosphere of mutual trust?

ES **We work with you to ensure that the basic terms of employment are fair and equitable.** In a high-performance work arena, companies want to attract, motivate, and retain the best employees. To do this, companies must use a variety of systems to provide fair and equitable terms of employment, recognize performance and skill attainment, and establish an employee stake in the enterprise. A quality consultant should be prepared to assess your current compensation and benefit system, and to help design and implement any changes necessary to enhance fairness and equity. (In a unionized setting, the collective bargaining agreement serves as the basis for any examination of compensation and benefits. Any changes in compensation and benefits will be negotiated through the collective bargaining process.) This process may involve

- Conducting wage and benefit surveys to monitor the market rate, as well as suggesting adjustments to the standard compensation package in order to maintain pay and benefits at or above market rates,
- Performing job evaluation studies to assess the relative value of jobs within the company, implementing a skill-based pay system, or placing all employees on salaried status with common fringe benefits,
- Linking pay to individual, group, and organizational performance through incentive systems that bestow individual workers or work teams with financial rewards when they improve the product or the work process, or when they make other improvements, and
- Making employees partners in the creation and distribution of wealth through gain sharing, profit sharing, or stock ownership.

ES **We can help you demonstrate a long-term commitment to labor-management partnership through efforts to ensure employment security.** A quality consultant should be prepared to help you design and implement systems to

- Enhance employability by helping employees assess their skills and develop new skills through training and job assignments. This may be accomplished through employee development centers that offer self-assessment tools, career counseling, educational opportunities, job listings within the company, and information about the jobs of the future.
- Involve employees in a meaningful way to identify ways to minimize or avoid lay offs by reducing payroll expenses until business improves (e.g., early retirements or buy-out programs, shortened work hours, job sharing, or salary/wage reductions); keeping work in-house and redeploying workers within the company (e.g., growing business into new areas or building on existing product lines or services); putting people into training when work demand is slow; implementing an employee exchange program, or pursuing employee ownership.

- Support "no-fault" exits by providing ample advanced notice, downsizing primarily through attrition and voluntary-separation, and investing in retraining and out-placement for employees regardless of their level (outplacement may include establishing a transition center, providing counseling support, and supplementing individual job hunt efforts with a direct mail campaign to other employers in the area).

Employment security provisions are sometimes the product of collective bargaining agreements. In these cases, the consultant should recognize and respect labor's independent role and its mission to provide job security.

For **We help you to ensure that the work environment supports a high quality of work life and protects employees' health and safety.** In today's tight economic environment, companies adopting family-supportive and other quality-of-life policies gain a competitive advantage by attracting and retaining a more talented, committed, and productive workforce. A quality consultant should be prepared to help you design and implement systems to support a high quality of work life and a safe working environment. This may include recommendations to

- Improve the condition of the actual physical plant,
- Promote fitness, health, and safety through flexible work hours and days, accommodations for disabled employees, child care, and antidiscrimination policies and practices,
- Monitor employee morale and commitment (through periodic employee surveys or informal meetings between senior executives and lower-level associates) and promptly and systematically address any problems, and
- Collect and analyze safety incidents, and use this information to identify ways to reduce accidents.

In unionized firms, the consultant should know of and respect the integrity of the contract in defining the many conditions of work.

INTERVIEW WORKSHEET

— Feel free to make copies of the Worksheet —

Instructions: Ask each question along with any follow-up questions needed to ensure that the consultant has had an opportunity to address each of the points contained in the Answers section of the Guide. Probes listed with each of the questions should help you to formulate any follow-up questions you need to ask.

1. **A Process for Establishing and Modifying Policies and Practices:** How will the services you provide help develop a process for establishing and modifying policies and practices that build commitment by both labor and management to improve individual, group, and organizational performance?

Probes:

- How do you ensure policies and practices are developed and modified in an atmosphere of mutual respect, trust, and goodwill?
- How will you ensure the viability and credibility of the process for developing and modifying policies and practices?
- How can you help us establish relevant criteria for developing and modifying policies and practices?
- How will you help us ensure ongoing monitoring and review of workplace performance?
- How will you help us provide a comprehensive training and development program to assist both workers and managers to acquire the communication, interpersonal, group, and industrial relations skills needed to develop and implement best practice policies and practices?
- What experience do you have working with unions as independent sources of power for workers?

2. **Fairness and Justice:** How will the services you provide help develop policies and practices that do not disadvantage any individual or group of employees?

Probes:

- How will you work to ensure that policies and practices minimize social and economic distinctions between management and other employees?
- How will you help us to ensure that issue resolution systems provide due process and allow free speech?

3. **Pride in Work:** How will the services you provide help develop policies and practices that stimulate pride in work?

Probes:

- How will you help us train all workers to know what the business is about, what challenges the company faces, and what contributions they make to the company's productivity.
- How will you help us to provide opportunities for individual and collective involvement in problem solving at all levels of the company?
- How can you help us to provide opportunities for individual and collective involvement in decision making related to management systems?
- How will you help us ensure that ongoing professional development and technical training strategies equip workers with a broad range of skills to increase labor flexibility, develop employees' capacity, and maximize employees' contributions?
- Can you show us how to organize work to promote employee skill development, commitment, responsibility, flexibility, and organizational productivity?

4. **Respect, Value, and Mutual Trust:** How will the services you provide help develop policies and practices that demonstrate respect and value for employees and their representative organizations, as well as promote an atmosphere of mutual trust?

Probes:

- How will you help us to ensure that the basic terms of employment are fair and equitable?
- How will you help us to demonstrate a long-term commitment to labor-management partnership through efforts to ensure employment security?
- How will you help us to ensure that the work environment supports a high quality of work life and protects employees' health and safety?

COMPARISON CHART

— Feel free to make copies of the Comparison Chart —

Instructions: Put the names of each of the consultants you interviewed in the blank boxes across the top of the chart. Use the notes from your Interview Worksheets with these consultants to place a check mark in the boxes corresponding to the points that the different consultants made. Add up the number of points covered by each consultant. Also note whether the consultants' company resumes, staff resumes, and references demonstrate quality and experience, as well as the consultants' costs. In comparing consultants, do not rely solely on the totals. Also be sure to compare (1) which points the consultants do and do not cover and whether your company can address the points not covered by a consultant, (2) whether the consultants' materials demonstrate quality and relevant experience, and (3) program costs.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS				
1. A process for establishing and modifying policies and practices				
- Ensures policies and practices are developed in an atmosphere of mutual respect, trust, and goodwill.				
- Ensures a viable and credible process for developing and modifying policies and practices.				
- Establishes relevant criteria for developing and modifying policies and practices.				
- Ensures ongoing monitoring and review of workplace performance.				
- Provides a comprehensive training and development program to assist both workers and managers to acquire the skills needed to develop and implement best practice policies and practices.				
- Recognizes and accepts the union as an independent source of representation for workers.				

2. Fairness and Justice				
- Ensures that policies and practices minimize social and economic distinctions between management and other employees.				
- Ensures that issue resolution systems provide due process, and allow free speech.				
3. Pride in work				
- Trains all workers to know what the business is about, the challenges the company faces, and the contributions they make to the company's productivity and success.				
- Provides opportunities for individual and collective involvement in problem solving at all levels of the company.				
- Provides opportunities for individual and collective involvement in decision making related to management systems.				
- Ensures that ongoing professional development and technical training strategies equip workers with a broad range of skills to increase labor flexibility, develop employees' capacity, and maximize employees' contributions.				
- Organizes work to promote employee skill development, commitment, responsibility, flexibility, and organizational productivity.				
4. Respect, value, and mutual trust				
- Ensures that the basic terms of employment are fair and equitable.				
- Demonstrates a long-term commitment to labor-management partnership through efforts to ensure employment security.				
- Ensures that the work environment supports a high quality of work life and protects employees' health and safety.				
TOTAL POINTS				
MATERIALS DEMONSTRATE EXPERIENCE AND QUALITY				
- Company resumes				
- Staff resumes				
- References				
COST				

This **GUIDE IN CONTEXT**

Improving labor-management relations is just one of a number of workforce and workplace changes companies are undertaking to remain competitive in today's global economy. For many companies, staying profitable involves adopting new technologies; restructuring work processes; and upgrading employees' knowledge, skills, and abilities; as well as redefining the relationship between employers and employees.

All of these changes are interrelated. New machines frequently require new work processes if they are to be fully used. New work processes can lead to changes in the focus of decision making and can redefine the roles of labor and management. Training in a variety of skills, including basic reading, writing, and mathematics, is almost always necessary to put *any* other changes into place successfully.

The National Workforce Assistance Collaborative has prepared a series of tools to help small and mid-sized companies find and select the high-quality service providers and products they need to undertake successful workforce and workplace changes, including the following:

- *Employee Training Interview Guide: Judging the Quality and Effectiveness of Training Providers*
- *Employee Training Product Checklist: Judging the Quality of Training Products*
- *Labor-Management Interview Guide: Judging the Quality and Effectiveness of Labor-Management Relations Consultants*
- *Resource Guide: A Key to Organizations Working in Employee Training, Labor-Management Relations, Work Restructuring, and Workplace Literacy*
- *Work Restructuring Interview Guide: Judging the Quality and Effectiveness of Work Restructuring Consultants*
- *Workplace Literacy Interview Guide: Judging the Quality and Effectiveness of Literacy Providers*
- *Workplace Literacy Product Checklist: Judging the Quality of Workplace Literacy Products*

Additional Collaborative publications designed for small and mid-sized businesses and the service providers working with them include the following:

Resource Listings

- *Workplace Literacy Publications: An Annotated Bibliography of Print Resources* — A workplace literacy bibliography.

Newsletters

- *Workforce Briefs* — A newsletter series for businesses.
- *Business Assistance Notes* — A newsletter series for service providers.

Tools for Companies

- *Pay-for-Knowledge* — A how-to guide on developing and implementing a pay-for-knowledge system.
- *Computer-Based Training* — A guide for selecting computer-based training products and services.

Tools for Service Providers

- *Integrated Service Delivery* — A publication providing insights into the best methods for delivering integrated services to small and mid-sized companies.
- *Delivering Cost-Effective Services to Small and Mid-Sized Companies* — A publication highlighting proven approaches for delivering cost-effective services to small and mid-sized companies.
- *Approaches to Forming a Learning Consortium: A Guide for Service Providers* — A how-to guide on forming learning consortia.
- *Marketing to Businesses* — Information on how to identify and effectively market services to a local business community.
- *Assessing an Organization's Training Needs* — A generic training needs assessment accompanied by instructions on how to approach and market the value of training to small and mid-sized business leaders.
- *Assessing the Value of Workforce Training* — An introduction to assessing the value of training programs, focusing on quick and easy strategies.

Internet Services

- *Internet Listserv* — An electronic forum for discussing workforce and workplace development issues. To subscribe to NWAC-L, send an e-mail message to LISTSERV@PSUVM.PSU.EDU saying "subscribe NWAC-L [YourFirstName YourLastName]."
- *Gopher Server* — Online access to materials and products produced by the Collaborative. The Gopher Server address is INFO.PSU.EDU. Open "Information Servers at Penn State," then "Research Centers and Institutes."
- *World Wide Web Home Page* — Information on the Collaborative and its products and services, as well as links to related information on the Internet (<http://www.psu.edu/institutes/nwac>).

All Collaborative publications can be ordered through the National Alliance of Business Distribution Center, listed on the front cover, or downloaded from the Collaborative's Internet Gopher Server or World Wide Web home page.

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